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“My heaven, how well she keeps up!”

## A GLIMPSE OF LIFE AT MONTE CARLO

[From "A Traveller at Forty," by Theodore Dreiser, The Century Co.]

OUTSIDE the car windows the sweeping fronds of the palms seemed almost to brush the train, hanging over white enclosures of stone. Green shutters and green lattices; red roofs and bright blue jardinières; the half-Italianized Frenchman with his swarthy face and burning eyes. Presently the train stopped at Cannes. Here were long trains that had come from St. Petersburg via Vilna and Vienna; and others from Munich, Berlin and Copenhagen with diners labeled "*Speisewagen*" and sleepers "*Schlafwagen*." Those from Paris, Calais, Brussels, Cherbourg bore the imposing legend, "*Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits et des Grands Express Européens*." There was a long black train rumbling in from the south with cars marked Tripoli, Roma, Firenze and Milano. You had a sense, from merely looking at the stations, that the idleness and the luxury of all the world was pouring in here at will.

In ten minutes we were off again. Barfleur expatiating solemnly on the fact that in England a homely girl was left to her own devices with no one to make anything of her, she being plain and that being the end of it; while here in France something was done with the poorest specimens.

"Now those two young ladies," he said, waving his hand dramatically in the direction of two departing travelers,—"they are not much—but look at them. See how smartly they are

gotten up. Somebody will marry them. They have been encouraged to buck up,—to believe that there is always hope."

Our train was pulling into the station at Monte Carlo. I had the usual vague idea of a much-talked-of but never-seen place.

"I can hear the boys calling *Ascenseur*," exclaimed Barfleur to Scorp prophetically, when we were still a little way out. He was as keen for the adventure as a child—much more so than I was. I could see how he set store by the pleasure-providing details of the life here; and Scorp, for all his lofty superiority, was equally keen. They indicated to me the great masses of baggage which occupied the platforms—all bright and new and mostly of good leather. I was interested to see the crowds of people—for there was a train departing in another direction—and to hear the cries of "*Ascenseur*" as predicted—the elevators lifting to the terrace in front of the Casino, where the tracks enter along a shelf of a declivity considerably above the level of the sea. It is a tight little place—all that I had expected in point of showiness—gay rococo houses, white and cream, with red roofs climbing up the sides of the bare brown hill which rises to La Turbie above. We did not stop, but went on to Mentone where we were to lunch. It was charming to see striped awnings—pink and white and blue and green—gay sunshades of various colors and ladies in fresh linens

and silks and men in white flannels and an atmosphere of outing generally. I think a sort of summer madness seizes on people under such circumstances and dull care is thrown to the winds, and you plan gay adventures and dream dreams and take yourself to be a singularly important person. And to think that this atmosphere should always be here, and that it can always be reached out of the snows of Russia and the bitter storms of New York and the dreary gray fogs of London, and the biting winds of Berlin and Paris!

THE tables were fairly swarming with a fascinating throng all very much alike in their attitude and their love of the game, but still individual and interesting. I venture to say that any one of the people I saw in this room, if you saw him in a crowd on the street, would take your attention. A native force and self-sufficiency went with each one. I wondered constantly where they all came from. It takes money to come to the Riviera; it takes money to buy your way into any gambling-room. It takes money to gamble; and what is more it takes a certain amount of self-assurance and individual selection to come here at all. By your mere presence you are putting yourself in contact and contrast with a notable standard of social achievement. Your intellectuality, your ability to take care of yourself, your breeding and your subtlety are at once challenged—not consciously, but unconsciously. Do you really belong here? the eyes of the attendants ask you as you pass. And the glitter and color and life and beauty of the room is a constant challenge.

It did not surprise me in the least that all these men and women in their health and attractiveness carried themselves with cynical, almost sneering hauteur. They might well do so—as the world judges these material things—for they are certainly far removed from the rank and file of the streets; and to see them extracting from their purses and their pockets handfuls of gold, unfolding layers of crisp notes that represented a thousand francs each, and with an almost indifferent air laying them on their favorite numbers or combinations was to my unaccustomed eye a gripping experience. Yet I was not interested in gambling—only in the people who played.

I know that to the denizens of this world who are fascinated by chance and find their amusement in such playing, this atmosphere is commonplace. It was not so to me. I watched the women—particularly the beautiful women—who strolled about the chambers with their escorts solely to show off their fine clothes. You see a certain type of youth here who seems to be experienced in this gay world that drifts from one resort to another, for you hear such phrases as “Oh, yes, I saw her at Aix-les-Bains,” or, “She was at Karlsbad last summer.” “Is that the same fellow she was with last year?” “My heaven, how well she keeps up!” or, “This must be her first season here—I have never seen her before.” Two or three of these young bloods would follow a woman all around the rooms, watching her, admiring her beauty quite as a horseman might examine the fine points of a horse. And all the while you could see that she was keenly aware of the critical fire of these eyes.